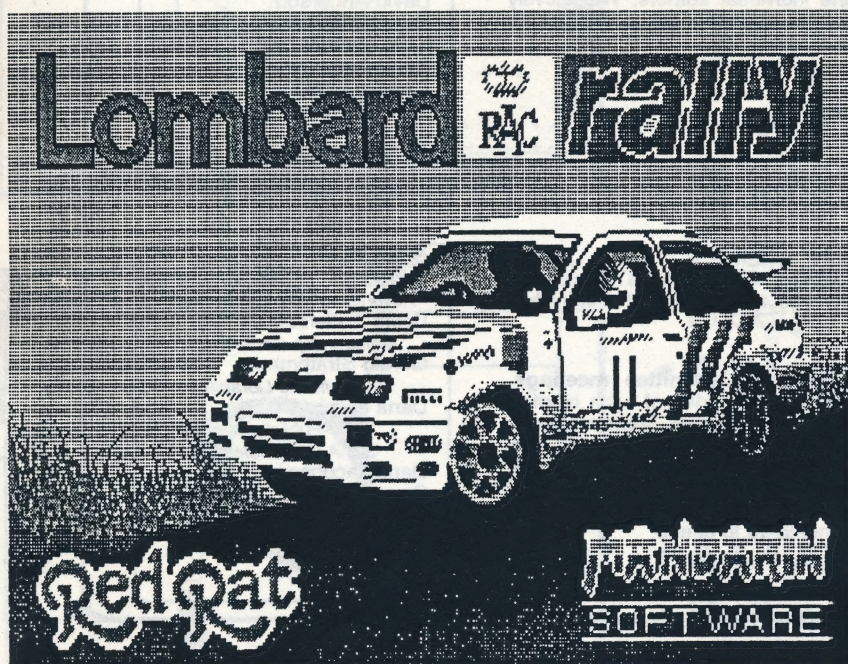


The South Shore Atari Group *Newsletter*



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SSAG

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SSAG Newsletter

THE SOUTH SHORE ATARI GROUP NEWSLETTER - VOLUME TWO, NUMBER FIVE

The Newsletter is a monthly publication of S.S.A.G., and is provided free of charge to our members. Our goal is to provide timely, accurate and useful information to the Atari community. Unless otherwise noted, permission is given to reproduce articles or columns provided that prominent credit is given to S.S.A.G. and the individual authors. We actively participate in newsletter exchange programs and will gladly trade copies of our newsletter for newsletters from other Atari users groups on an issue-by-issue basis.

Correspondence should be directed to:

S.S.A.G. News
c/o: Dave Read
1331 Washington Street
Abington, MA 02351

Co-Publishers, Dana Jacobson and Dave Read can also be contacted on these bulletin board systems:

Harbour Light _____ (617) 472-1503
Toad Hall _____ (617) 587-8642

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S.S.A.G. holds its **general meetings** on the third Friday of each month, from 7-9PM at the Computer Cache store in Quincy. (See map on rear cover.) Membership dues fee is \$12.00 per year, which covers admission to all meetings, voting privileges, newsletter subscription and member prices on PD software. For newcomers, the first meeting is free.

S.S.A.G. **Steering Committee meetings** are held on the first Friday of each month, 7-9PM at Computer Cache.. Membership in the committee is voluntary and open to any S.S.A.G. member. The committee seeks input from members concerning all aspects of the users group, and welcomes any interested members to attend.

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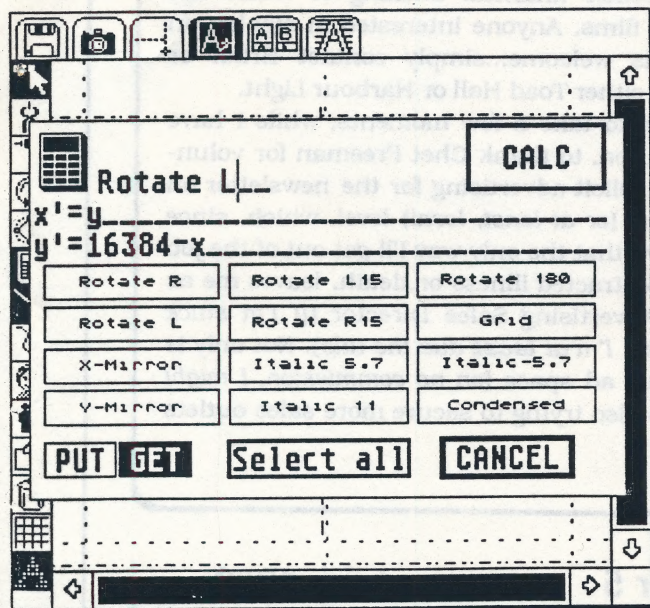
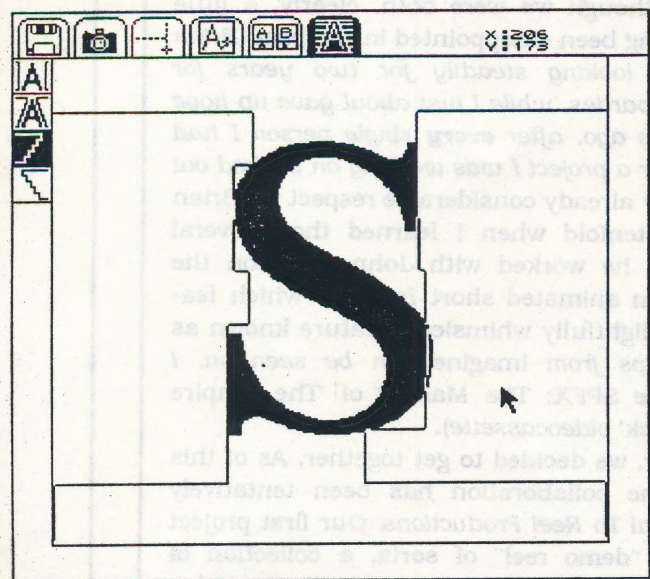
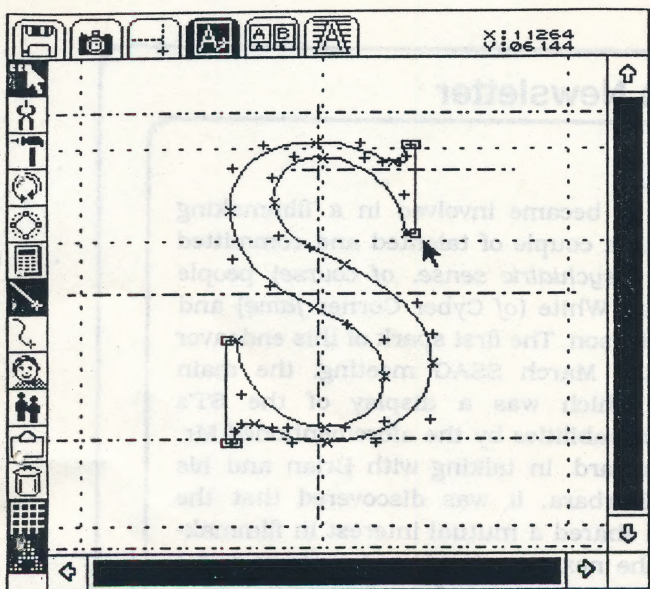
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ON AIR



Behind The Mike

An Irregular Column
by
David Anderson

"It's not much of a cheese shop, is it?"

- John Cleese

Be forewarned: the above quote (from Monty Python's "Cheese Shop" sketch) will most likely have little or nothing to do with the content of this column. It's there because I like trivia in general, and quotes in particular. Until I run out of them (which could take a while), I'll be leading off all my columns with quotes from here and there (and they probably won't have anything to do with the column's content, either).

Since my column last appeared, I've been deluged with requests (as long as you consider *two* a deluge) to cut down on the news portion of the column in favor of my rambling on about whatever crosses my mind, because some people are just so enamored of the way I do it (ramble, that is). Just goes to show you how desperate people can get. You still have time to get your votes in, of course, but until somebody complains, I think I will ramble a tad more and report a wee bit less. If you wish to voice your opinions on the subject, you can leave me E-mail on Harbour Light or Toad Hall (David Anderson), DELPHI (STARWALKER) or GEnie (D.ANDERSON22). On to

the good stuff.

I recently became involved in a filmmaking venture with a couple of talented and committed (not in the psychiatric sense, of course) people named Brian White (of Cyber Corner fame) and Barbara Erickson. The first spark of this endeavor flared at the March SSAG meeting, the main feature of which was a display of the ST's animation capabilities by the aforementioned Mr. White. Afterward, in talking with Brian and his girlfriend, Barbara, it was discovered that the three of us shared a mutual interest in filmmaking. Over the next couple of weeks, Brian and I would run into each other from time to time and talk a little more about collaborating on a film project, although we were both, clearly, a little wary, having been disappointed in the past (Brian had been looking steadily for two years for interested parties, while I just about gave up hope three years ago, after *every* single person I had lined up for a project I was working on backed out on me). My already considerable respect for Brian increased tenfold when I learned that, several years ago, he worked with John Dods on the stop-motion animated short *Imagine*, which featured a delightfully whimsical creature known as "Grog" (clips from *Imagine* can be seen on, I believe, the SPFX: The Making of 'The Empire Strikes Back' videocassette).

Finally, we decided to get together. As of this writing, the collaboration has been tentatively named *Real To Reel Productions*. Our first project will be a "demo reel" of sorts, a collection of trailers (previews) of films that we'd like to make. These trailers will be entered in film festivals and used to solicit financial backing to make the completed films. Anyone interested in signing on with us is welcome...simply contact Brian or myself, on either Toad Hall or Harbour Light.

I'd like to take a few moments, while I have your attention, to thank Chet Freeman for volunteering to solicit advertising for the newsletter on the regional (or at least, local) level, which, since we all know that the only way I'll get out of the job is either protracted illness or death, leaves me as National Advertising Sales Director (if I'm stuck with the job, I'm at *least* due the title). Not only is Chet selling ad space (on no commission, I might add), he's also trying to secure more sales outlets

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for SSAG News. Dealers outside the Greater Boston area interested in stocking SSAG News should contact the SSAG for more details.

And now, the news:

Jim Allen (a/k/a *Fast Technology*) took his 16MHz accelerator, *TURBO16* (which he demonstrated for the SSAG back in February), to the World of Atari show in Anaheim, and it turned out to be one of the show's big hits. There's been "subspace chatter" about it on most of the networks ever since, and what I've seen has been pretty favorable. Look for Fast Technology to begin providing online support for the product on GEnie. The rumor mill indicates that a certain radiogenic SSAG'er may become Fast Tech's counterpart to SoftLogik's Jack Durre and Nevin Shalit (non-employees who help out as online reps for the company).

Also seen at WoA was a \$99 accelerator from JRI, the ST Genlock people, called *J.A.T.O. (Jet Assisted Take-Off)*, which isn't guaranteed to work with "slow-RAM" ST's. They also displayed *ST4096C*, a board that boosts the ST's color palette to 4096. What we need now is a way to augment the number of simultaneously displayable colors. 16 is still the limit with *ST4096C*.

Migraph announced a hand-held scanning unit, to be available by the end of June. The scanner provides up to 400 dpi resolution, and will scan a swath just a hair over four inches wide. The scanner will be bundled initially with *Touch-Up* for \$500, and later with *Touch-Up Lite* for about \$100 less. Migraph also announced flatbed and sheet-fed page scanners, although no pricing was given.

Seymour-Radix, the Texas-based company that brought the world *IMGScan* (a deadly weapon in the hands of masters like Rich "Mad Dog" Maddox and Dave "The Hammer" Read), announced a product to back up hard drives to a standard VCR. The unit backs up at a rate of 1 megabyte per minute, and is priced at \$249. ICD was not worried about this system providing serious competition for their \$895, 6.5 megabyte/minute *FA*ST Tape Backup*.

Atari, fresh from their triumphant showing at Comdex, displayed *Stacy*, the laptop ST. Also on view were the new *Megafile 44* removable cartridge hard drive and *UltraScript*, the PostScript-com-

patibility package by Imagen, now working (quite well, if you ask me...and even if you don't) on a variety of printers (including a plethora of dot-matrix models) besides the *SLM804*.

Gadgets by Small, Inc. showed off *Spectre GCR*, the all-in-one Mac emulator and disk translator unit, priced at \$299. Gadgets mailed out upgrade order forms to registered owners, offering a \$100 rebate to upgrade from an original *Spectre 128* to the new GCR unit. Sounds like a good deal at first glance, but on looking over the figures again, it occurs to me that people who upgrade will end up paying about \$80 more for the unit than someone who buys a GCR to begin with (\$179 for the original *Spectre* plus \$299 for the GCR less \$100 rebate equals \$378...without considering the cost of the Mac ROMS!). More than a few *Spectre* owners I've encountered, while remaining second to none in their admiration of Dave Small's inventive genius, are a bit put off by this development.

Meanwhile, Avant-Garde Systems pulled the wraps off *pc-ditto II*, to reveal that it is not a cartridge unit, as originally presumed by many, but an internal-mount device. According to Avant-Garde, *pc-ditto II* rates three times as high on the Norton S.I. scale as an unenhanced IBM PC XT, and nearly twice as high as IBM's PS/2 Model 30! While *pc ditto II* has always been advertised as a 4.77 MHz device, its 3.0 Norton S.I. rating is equivalent to that of a 10 MHz XT (by comparison, 10 MHz AT/'286 machines generally rate in the mid-to-upper 20s!).

ISD Marketing was on hand, showing off some of their new Compugraphic fonts for *Calamus*. I'm told the program looked quite snappy running on Monitorm's 19-inch *Viking 1* monitor, which should be shipping soon after you read this.

All in all, the word on *World of Atari #1* is good, with attendance estimates for the show's two-day run ranging between 9,000 and 11,000. Next on the circuit: the Michigan Atari Computer Expo in Dearborn.

That's it for now. Live long and prosper.

David Anderson has a nasty habit of being volunteered for things by other people, sometimes even people he doesn't know, and is, among other things, a disk jockey. His show, the "Saturday Night Radio Event" can be heard from 6:00 to 10:00pm on WNSH-AM, 1570 kHz, Salem, Massachusetts.

BIG BLUE BYTES *by Chet Freeman*

IBM Batch files, particularly the **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file, helps you use **pc ditto**, the **IBM** emulation program, by automating the execution of a sequence of programs and DOS commands.

Theoretically, our **ST** operating system is so user friendly that we don't need the **MS (Microsoft)/IBM** Disk Operating System (**DOS**) batch file capability. I don't agree. On the other hand, **MS DOS** doesn't have our **ST AUTO** folder capability, which is easier for computer novices to set up and use.

IBM's COMMAND.COM file runs a batch file named **AUTOEXEC.BAT** immediately after the Basic Input Output system (**IBMBIO.COM**), Disk Operating System (**IBMDOS.COM**), and **CONFIG.SYS** files are run or read. We examined **CONFIG.SYS** files for **pc ditto** in the last issue.

STs and **IBMs** boot differently due to the different OS media, in addition to different chips. The **IBM's** OS is mostly disk based, whereas the **ST's** (**TOS**) is now in ROM (Read Only Memory) chips. **IBMs** require a drive to load the OS, and the OS uses up some Readable Addressable Memory (**RAM**). But, being disk based, it is easier to issue changes. How long will we have to wait for **TOS 1.4**? A disk based OS, like **pc ditto**, can replace the **ST's TOS**.

At bootup, the **ST** reads **DESKTOP.INF**, executes programs only (not commands) found in the **AUTO** folder, then starts Graphics Environment Manager (**GEM**), and finally loads Desk Accessories (**DAs**). This fixed execution order is a problem for those **ST** programs which need **GEM** to run. The problem of the programs running before **GEM** has been solved by the **STARTGEM** and **HeadSTART** programs, which start **GEM** first, and then autorun a program.

Upon booting, **IBMs** execute DOS commands

and programs in the order they appear in the **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file. The **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file is simply an ASCII text file. This gives the **IBM** user the ability to easily establish program execution order and to also include DOS commands. For instance, the **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file can include a **COPY** command to copy files to a **RAMdisk**. **STs** needs a separate program to do this.

The **PC Ditto** manual shows how to create an **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file using the **COPY CON:** (console) command. It's easier to use an **ST** ASCII word processor. The manual suggests putting **PCDSETTD.COM** in the file to preserve the **ST's** date/time setting. Read your **pc ditto** disk text files to see if two other **pc ditto** files, which I have used without any problems, should be included in your **AUTOEXEC.BAT**:

SPEEDY3.EXE /H (or, /L)

QWICKEYS.EXE

The **IBM** internal commands **PATH** and **PROMPT** are included in most **AUTOEXEC.BAT** files. For the "quickstart" floppy disk suggested last month, add the following lines to your **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file (substitute the appropriate hard drive letter for the "A" below):

PATH A:\DOS;A:\DOS\FORMAT

PROMPT \$p\$g

The **PROMPT** command tells DOS to display the current (sub) directory and a ">".

In this example, the order of the lines is not important. But, the **PATH** command needs to precede any programs not located in the main directory and to list the program's subdirectory, unless the **CDI** (change directory) command precedes the program. The **PATH** command tells DOS in what subdirectories to look for files.

Under early DOS versions, the **FORMAT** com-

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mand formatted the default drive, which for hard drive users was usually the hard drive. So, one common practice was to hide the *FORMAT.COM* command from DOS in a subdirectory not included in the *PATH* command. Others include renaming it, or writing a batch file to always format drive A. Since the *FORMAT* command now requires a drive letter specification and without it warns that you are tampering with your hard drive, this practice is no longer as necessary.

Some other DOS commands typically included in *AUTOEXEC.BAT* files - use any or all in yours:

ECHO OFF - to shut off display of command/program execution

VERIFY ON - (default is OFF for disk writes)

CLS - to clear the screen, particularly if *ECHO OFF* is not used

DATE - to set the date if no clock battery

TIME - to set the time if no clock battery

(Note: execution pauses for date/time input)

CHKDSK C:/F - to check hard drive and fix errors in the directory or FAT (File Allocation Table)

BREAK ON - to have DOS to check for <CONTROL><BREAK> at any DOS request

To stop *AUTOEXEC.BAT* (or any batch file) execution hold down <CONTROL><BREAK>. The <BREAK> key is the ST "I" (slash) key (second from top right on the ST keyboard).

Batch files are very powerful and flexible. Batch files can run or call other batch files. Parameters can be passed. Batch file commands (in addition to DOS commands) include FOR, GOTO, and IF which, combined with labels, allow batch files to act as mini-basic programs.

Some power IBM users have only one line in their *AUTOEXEC.BAT* which executes another batch file called *STARTUP.BAT* containing the usual *AUTOEXEC.BAT* commands/programs. This is done because many IBM install programs mess up *AUTOEXEC.BAT* by automatically adding information, or even overwriting it. The courageous even change *COMMAND.COM* to look for a filename other than *AUTOEXEC.BAT* to protect against this.

If you want to exchange disks with IBMs, you may experience drive capacity incompatibility. Between a 360K 40 track 5.25" ST drive and older, similarly equipped PC/XTs, or compatibles, you won't have any problems. But, to format compatible disks on a 1.2 meg 5.25" floppy equipped AT, or a new 1.4 meg 3.5" equipped PS/2, you can have a problem.

I use batch files to reconfigure an AT's 1.2 meg floppy for compatibility with my ST's 80 track 5.25" drive. This should work for PS/2s also. It works like *SUPERBOOT* for the ST by renaming files. First, I created a file called *CONFIG.ST* for the AT:

BUFFERS=40

FILES=50

DRIVPARM=/D:0/F:2

I also created an alternate *AUTOEXEC.BAT* file called *AUTOEXEC.ST* and reverted back to DOS 3.2 by booting off the A drive. This avoids the DOS 3.3 *DEVICE=DRIVER.SYS* drive assignment problem described last month.

Next, I wrote two batch files (the line order is important):

CHANG2ST.BAT (1st batch filename)

RENAME CONFIG.SYS CONFIG.IBM

RENAME CONFIG.ST CONFIG.SYS

RENAME AUTOEXEC.BAT AUTOEXEC.IBM

RENAME AUTOEXEC.ST AUTOEXEC.BAT

CHNG2IBM.BAT (2nd batch filename)

RENAME CONFIG.SYS CONFIG.ST

RENAME CONFIG.IBM CONFIG.SYS

RENAME AUTOEXEC.BAT AUTOEXEC.ST

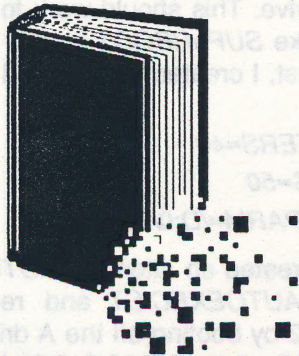
RENAME AUTOEXEC.IBM AUTOEXEC.BAT

To configure the AT to read, write and format disks compatible with my ST, I type *CHANG2ST*, hit <ENTER> and reboot. (You do not have to type the .BAT to run a batch file.) To change back for the larger 1.2 meg disk capacity, I type *CHNG2IBM*, hit <ENTER> (or, <RETURN>), and reboot. This reconfigures the drives and saves a lot of typing!

That's it for this month. Maybe next time we'll be able to take a look at *pc ditto II*. It sounds great! If not, we'll check out some PD programs.

The Digital Page

Desktop
Publishing
Column
By
Dave Read



Overflowing Fonts!

The main body of this month's column was written way back in March after I discovered how to get **GDOS** fonts created with **Neocept's FONTZ!** to work with **Timeworks Desktop Publisher ST**... I had to go to New Mexico for a couple of weeks in early April and missed the publication deadline for last month's issue. (Now I know how it feels from *both* sides! And by the way, I'd like to publicly compliment my co-publisher, **Dana Jacobson**, for the fine solo job he did turning out last month's **SSAG News**.) In the meantime, there have been some other important developments in the area of typefaces and ST DTP, most notably, the arrival of **MichTron's HyperFont**, which is an excellent and unique DTP utility that allows the generation of outline fonts for use with **GDOS**. Nope, that's not a misprint. Design the font once and use it with any of your **GDOS** devices and applications in any range of sizes you need. Within a few weeks of the appearance of **HyperFont**, the long-awaited **UltraScript** has shown up and now our options have expanded enormously. I'll finish up with info on both of these major DTP developments, but first, allow me my (albeit fleeting) moment of glory:

At Last It Can Be Told

I have entered into battle with the dreaded **GDOS** monster and emerged victorious! I've

tamed **Timeworks Desktop Publisher ST** into accepting **GDOS** fonts created with **Neocept's FONTZ!**... *Release the pigeons! Let all make merry!*...

Okay, I know I'm being overly dramatic, but after my six month long, stop and go struggle with this situation, I feel like cheering. Looking back, the problems I had seem almost trivial, but believe me, I feel as though it's a major accomplishment. A lot of my difficulties were the result of my own ignorance and disorganization, but ultimately, that one back-breaking straw, that intermittent glitch, the one that got away, turned out to be the result of an unpublished, application-specific bug. I feel vindicated. And here come the fonts!

I won't keep you in suspense: Although **GDOS** allows the font ID number to range from 0 to 32767, **Timeworks DTP** does not. (The font ID number is a unique value placed within the header of a **GDOS** font file to indicate fonts are from the same family. It allows an application to know, for example, that the 36 point laser and hi-rez screen Swiss fonts go together.) All this time, I had been keeping the ID numbers on my own fonts way up there around 10000 or so, thinking myself very clever, because I expected to *avoid* font ID number conflicts with existing fonts in this way! Wow. In fact, the one font that I was doing most of my experimenting with happened to have an ID number of 10012. The ID number on the **Timeworks Swiss** font is 00012. Guess what? Even though **Timeworks** would display the *name* of my font, I could only get the font to display onscreen by performing an arcane and convoluted sequence of operations, switching between the Text and Paragraph modes of the program. Otherwise, whenever I selected my own font, **Timeworks** would just display Swiss. I don't know if I ever would have stumbled onto this on my own, but fortunately, the April issue of **ST Log** featured two **GDOS** font related items that brought it to my attention. I feel deeply indebted to Charles F. Johnson and Maurice Molyneaux for pointing out that *some* applications won't accept font IDs larger than 256. Upon reading this, I booted up **FONTZ!**, fixed the ID numbers, did the '**GDOS Shuffle**' (About which, more later,), booted up **Timeworks DTP**, and 'Huzzah! Huzzah!', there

was my personal font in all its glory!

Now that the smoke has cleared, I can present the complete process of adding fonts to **Timeworks DTP** via **FONTZ!**. Here are the basic steps:

1. Create a font family by using **FONTZ!** to make a separate **GDOS** font file for each typesize/display device combination. (Be sure to use an ID number below 256, and don't use a number already installed in any of the existing **Timeworks** fonts!)
2. Copy the font files to the **Timeworks GDOS** folder.
3. Edit the **ASSIGN.SYS** file to include the names of your font files.
4. Boot-up using this **ASSIGN.SYS** file.
5. Run the **Timeworks FONTWID.APP** program. (You must first delete the **PUBLISH.WID** file.)
6. Run **Timeworks PUBLISH.APP** program. Your new font(s) should now be available.

Simple, isn't it?

The steps should be followed precisely, since there are a lot of 'invisible' ways to goof up (This is the voice of experience!) and it's a lengthy process that doesn't get any funner on repetition!

Well, that was then and this is now...

I've added **HyperFont** to my typeface arsenal and things are looking very much brighter. **HyperFont** avoids the ID number problem by only allowing the selection of low font ID numbers. What's really great about it though, is what it does. You probably are aware by now that **GDOS** uses bitmapped font files for its text output. In other words, for each size of each typeface and for each output device (Screen, dot matrix printer, laser printer, etc.), a separate file is required to define which dots are set and where for each character in the typeface. To create all these bitmaps is going to be extremely tedious and time-consuming, even for just a couple of sizes on a couple of different devices. **FONTZ!** allows one to perform scaling on a **GDOS** font file, which is helpful, but alas, the ST has but limited intellect and does not understand that a curve made of a certain number of pixels should be approximated as a curve of a different

size after scaling, and the user must manually edit the new bitmap to obtain the closest approximation of the original shape. This problem manifests itself regardless of which direction the scaling is done. If a bitmap is scaled down to a smaller size, details are lost. If it is scaled up to a larger size, the 'jaggies' which were visually acceptable in the smaller size have become large enough to ruin the appearance of the characters, and must be 'faired' by eye to regain the desired shape.

HyperFont automates and perfects the scaling process by relying on virtual rather than literal character descriptions. Instead of generating a single bitmap of a type face, **HyperFont** contains graphical objects which can make use of the maximum resolution of any device. (This corresponds to **Easy Draw**'s object-oriented graphics approach vs. pixel-oriented 'paint' programs like **DEGAS** or **Neochrome**.) The program makes excellent use of *Bezier* curves, which provide the smoothest of possible transitions between lines. I intend to do an in-depth review of **HyperFont** for next month's issue. With the combination of **FONTZ!**'s detailed file control and conversion capabilities, and **HyperFont**'s wonderful outline font design, I've got lots of powerful capabilities for **GDOS** font design and generation. Now I've got to put my money up front and come up with some usable font designs! *No more excuses!*

So now that it seems like I've got **GDOS** in the bag, along comes **UltraScript**, and it looks like maybe I'm starting from scratch... **UltraScript** is a very high quality print output language that does for the ST what **PostScript** has done for the Macintosh. I've seen **UltraScript** output from the Atari laser (And if all goes well, you're looking at some of it right now...), and it is **GOOD!** **UltraScript** comes with a limited number of fonts (Sigh...), but many more are already available (Phew!). We may end up doing some parts of the newsletter with each system for comparison...

Anyway, the floodgates are open, and if the ST is ever going to carve out a chunk of the DTP market for itself, I expect right about now is when it will happen. Until next time!...



C O R N E R

CAD

GRAPHICS

AND ANIMATION

COLUMN

By

B R I A N W H I T E

Firstly, I'd like to apologize for my mysterious absence from last month's newsletter (what do you mean that you didn't notice!), but due to circumstances beyond my control (due mostly to the fact that the mass of a Ford Grenada is greater than the combined mass of myself and my bicycle...ouch), I was unable to meet the deadline. Luckily the damage was limited to varying degrees of dermal evanescence, and so I have endured to bring you this month's animation column, featuring a review of **AEGIS ANIMATOR**.

ANIMATOR is not a new package (1986), but after being mysteriously scarce for the past couple of years, it has for some reason started reappearing on dealers' shelves. The program seems to have gotten very little publicity, and even less of an advertising budget, and as a result, many people are not even aware of its existence.

It may seem unfair to compare the program to some of the newer animation packages (i.e. **CYBERPAINT** and **ART and FILM DIRECTOR**), but sympathy and/or nostalgia are usually not criteria for spending our software dollars. The

product does, however, have some unique features.

Firstly, and quite simply, the program is the easiest of the animation packages I have used. The usual pull-down menus are augmented by an icon-based "fast-menu" for most of the important functions. The program also features a text bar at the bottom of the screen, that will step you through most procedures. When you activate an icon, the 'help' bar will tell you what you picked up, and a brief line on how to use it (i.e. "rotate object; first select center"). The fast menu also features a question mark icon, which can be picked up, and in turn, placed on any other icon that you may need info about, and a brief description will appear in the text ('help') bar.

AEGIS ANIMATOR features two types of animation: Traditional 'cel'-type animation, and its unique "morphing" functions. Unlike most animation programs, **ANIMATOR** does not base its creations on 'frames', but rather a series of "tweens" or "morphs" (AEGIS jargon for trundications of 'in-betweening' and metamorphosis' respectively). The "morphing" functions are unique to this product. Other animation products will let you pick a beginning and an end location for an object's motion and automatically draw the 'in-betweening', but **ANIMATOR** will not only allow you to change the size and rotation of an object over the length of the tween, but the *shape* of the object as well. For instance, place a square on the left side of the screen, now drag it over to the right side. Now take the "hook" icon and use it to pull on the corners of the square and distort its shape. When you play back this tween (morph?) the square will smoothly glide across the screen, altering its shape as it goes. Several changes can be made to the original shape, one at a time (size, rotation, motion, etc.); but when rendered, the changes will all happen concurrently, as long as they were all made within the same tween. All the shape manipulation is very intuitive. If you wish to move a shape, simply grab the move icon (shaped, naturally, like a hand). However, the program is not concerned with the path that you take while moving the object during a tween (only the beginning and end points). If you

moved the object in a zigzag pattern, the ANIMATOR will show it going in a straight line. However, there is a "path" function, that will allow you to plot a course with the mouse for your shapes to follow in the tween.

Now, I know that many of you out there could think of many ideas for an animation that could utilize a programs ability to metamorphose an object into something else, (I know I could!) but now for the letdown. The fact that I keep referring to the animated objects in this program as 'shapes' is no misnomer. All these wonderful morphing functions, can only be used with the only forms that ANIMATOR will let you draw...a mono-colored, 2-D polygon, which obviously limits the complexity of the animation that you will be able to create. Regardless of that limitation, the animations that this tweening feature creates are quite smooth, and the illusion of 3 dimensions, can be simulated by rotating the 'flat' shape on its X and Y axis'. The program would benefit greatly from the ability to draw or map a pattern onto the planes, but alas...



The second type of animation that can be done with this program, is to simulate 'cel'-type animation, where each step in an object's motion is substituted one at a time (into a tween) and when run at speed, appears to set the subject in motion. Here it is possible to use whatever colors and patterns you wish, but because ANIMATOR has no real drawing functions of its own, you must import your cels in from your own drawing program. The program

recognizes .NEO format files for its background and cel pictures, but you could, of course, use your favorite drawing program (i.e. DEGAS) and convert the files with one the PD converters (i.e. PICSWITCH...have you sent in your donation?). For instance, if you wish to show a character walking, you would create all the separate drawings that would make up each step of the 'walk cycle' (all on the same picture file if you have the room), then load the entire screen into ANIMATOR where you would 'block' each step as a separate cel and give each its own name. Now, when you animate, you can just call up each individual cel, move it anywhere onto the background (another pre-made NEO file). Yes, a bit time consuming, but basically the way traditional animation has been done for decades (sans the computer, of course). Besides, tweening can't do *everything*! It would be great if the aforementioned 'morphing' functions could be utilized with these drawn cels, but alas...

Another function unique to AEGIS ANIMATOR is its built-in 'storyboard' editing functions. Selecting this function will open up 6 small windows on the screen, and up to 6 different previously created animations can be loaded into each one (naturally limited to the complexity of the animations and RAM limitations). Once loaded, you can cut and splice tweens between animations, a very handy feature.

AEGIS uses a different approach to the format it uses to store animation files. Because all the characters that are used in the animations are either inherent in the program (i.e. the shapes) or drawn in their entirety previously and stored in their own files (i.e. the cels), the animation files that it saves are small, as they do not need to store large batches of graphic information (such as CYBER series delta files). It merely stores the motion in a script file. The resulting file, for any who care to see it, is easily loaded into a text editor and easily deciphered (such as "MOVE_POLY 0 5 5 0" would mean to move polygon 0 down and to the right 5 pixels). If one were the least bit clever, you could 'create' an animation right in the text editor.

Being one of the first developers to explore animation on the ST, AEGIS had a chance to make themselves the standard for the ATARI

graphics market (as they have for other machines), but they seemed to have dropped the ball. If AEGIS had backed-up ANIMATOR with the several modules that were written for other machines (a 3-D modeler, sound and music programs, titling modules, special-effects generators, etc.), then the program would not be so 'close-ended', and have a future. But three years after the appearance of ANIMATOR, it seems that AEGIS has chosen to dead-end its ST involvement with this package. It's unfortunate, as the program is very easy to use, and has some unique features, but as a stand-alone animator, it's a bit too limited. If you just want to dabble in simple animation, then this program can be a lot of fun, but if you're looking for something a little more serious, I'd look elsewhere.

Word Perfect has issued a maintenance update of Atari **Word Perfect 4.1** which allows alternate file selector programs, faster printing and print preview.

File selector programs, such as **Universal Item Selector II**, can replace the **Word Perfect** version. This allows easier scrolling and directory changes. You may, if you wish, continue to use the **Word Perfect** file selector system.

Printing while multiple windows are open has been speeded up.

A print preview capability to see a document complete with headers, footers, page numbers, etc. has been added. A new screen printer definition allows printing to a disk file which can be viewed using a Look function.

A file handling improvement reduces the number of disk swaps for single drive systems.

Registered users may obtain the maintenance update for \$10 by calling (800) 222-9409 or writing to:

Word Perfect Atari Update
81 N. State Street
Orem, Utah 84057

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WORLD OF ATARI AT DISNEYLAND

By Dan Malik

Imagine being able to spend an April week in sunny California while the Northeast is still trying to break away from the throes of another winter. And, imagine that sunny California location is Anaheim, home of the world famous Disneyland. And to top it off, imagine an Atarifest taking place at that exact location on the weekend. Talk about "Fantasyland". But I didn't have to imagine all that because I was fortunate to be able to attend the first **ST WORLD**-sponsored **World of Atari Show**, held right across the street from Disneyland on April 22nd and 23rd.

The World of Atari was billed as the largest Atari-specific show ever held. I don't know if it managed to live up to that claim, but there was something there for everyone: from good deals on software and hardware, a chance to see some of the newest items for our favorite computer, and the opportunity to talk with some of the biggest names in Atariland. Although it doesn't cover everything that happened at the show, the following is my attempt to give you a good idea of what the show was all about.

By my estimate, there were 25

hardware/software developers present and ten vendors peddling their wares. Most of the vendors seemed to be from California, which I guess, is understandable. Some of the better known developers present included **Astra Systems**, **Avant-Garde**, **Beckemeyer Development**, **CodeHead Software**, **Gadgets By Small**, **Gribnif Software**, **Happy Computers**, **ICD**, **Imagen Corp.**, **JRI Enterprises**, **Megamax**, **MichTron**, **Migraph**, **Seymor/Radix**, and **Supra**. Although I haven't been keeping up with all the details of the **Gadgets By Small** and **Happy Computers** relationship, I know there is a rift there, and thought it was interesting to note they were located in opposite corners of the hall.

ICD was showing its entire line of hardware including their new hard disk tape backup system. This unit uses tiny tape cassettes, has a backup rate of 6.5 MB per minute, a capacity of 155.7 MB on one tape, uses GEM, and supports TOS, MS-DOS, Magic Sac, and Spectre partitions. Hard drives can share the same box for a compact system. List is around \$800 (I think).

Seymor/Radix introduced its new hard disk tape backup. Unlike the usual tape backup units,

this one plugs into the cartridge port and uses an existing VCR connected to the ST by standard RCA cables to store up to 360 MB on a standard VCR tape at eight megabits per minute. List is \$249.95.

CodeHead Software was there showing "HotWire!" and "MidiMax." "HotWire!" lets you run any ST program instantly by simply pressing a user-definable "hot" key from the desktop or from the "HotWire!" menu, regardless of how deeply the program is buried on a hard disk. Among its other features, "HotWire!" also enhances the Install Application feature of GEM. List is \$39.95.

"MidiMax" is a program that provides "midi macros" plus other features of interest to the MIDI enthusiast. List is \$49.95

While at the **CodeHead** booth, I was able to talk to Charlie Johnson, the author of many useful ST programs, including ARCSHELL. I asked him about the 2.05 version of that program that I have seen floating around. He said the last official version is 1.98 and 2.05 was not of his doing. For whatever reason, someone posted the modified (?) program with the new version number while leaving Charlie's name in the program. He does not support it and recommends not using it as it may be the vehicle for a virus. He asks that it be removed from wherever it may exist.

Migraph was showing "TouchUp" and their not yet available hand scanner. Just about all images you can roll the scanner over can be saved in resolutions between 100 and 400 DPI in various formats including .IMG, .PCX, .TIF, Degas, MacPaint, and Printmaster. When released, it will include a scaled down version of "Touch-Up" so you can manipulate your scanned images. I think the intended price is \$429.

Imagen was showing their new PostScript emulator, "UltraScript." "UltraScript" allows the printing of PostScript files with a two megabyte or more Atari and an SLM804. It also supports the HP DeskJet and Epson dot matrix printers, but I'm not sure if one program supports all of the above or if separate versions are available. I'm also not sure if printing on the HP or Epsoms requires two megs of memory as using it with

the laser would. The "UltraScript" output looked very good regardless of what it was printed on. List is \$229.95.

Gribnif was showing "Neodesk 2.0." "NeoDesk" has been around for a while now, so everyone is probably familiar with its features. The new version 2.03 was demonstrated, and **Gribnif** was doing free upgrades from version 2.0 at the show. The main enhancement of 2.03 is the ability to create custom file icons. List is \$49.95.

Artistech Development introduced "Da Vinci," a graphic editor with a unique interface, for serious graphic applications. Availability is August with a list of \$99.95.

JRI was showing three exciting new products, the "GenLock System," the "J.A.T.O. Board," and the "ST4096C Board." The "GenLock System" allows the combining of any low or medium res drawing or animation with an external video source such as a VCR. No special software is required as the genlocking is accomplished entirely through the hardware. It is installed inside the computer and requires no soldering, but is compatible only with a Mega (I think). List is \$650.

J.A.T.O. stands for Jet Assisted Take Off and is a 16 MHz accelerator for the ST. It requires replacing the current 68000 with the chip provided, but there is no trace cutting nor jumpers to install. Speeds are selectable between 8 and 16 MHz with a LED indicating the speed. **JRI** warns that the J.A.T.O. board may not work with slow RAM, so it may not work with all STs. List is \$99.95

The ST4096C expands the color palette of the ST and MEGA from 512 colors to 4096. The board is compatible with existing software, requires no soldering, trace cutting, or jumpers but does need an additional shifter chip which should be available at Atari dealers. List is \$49.95.

Fast Technologies was demonstrating its ST accelerator, the "TURBO 16". The "TURBO 16" supposedly works on all STs, even those equipped with the slow RAMs, is switchable between 8 and 16 MHz, and supports all

memory sizes, **pc ditto**, and **Spectre**. List ranges from \$399 to \$499, depending on the configuration. *(Editor's note: this is Jim Allen's accelerator board, which was demonstrated to S.S.A.G. a few months ago. Nice going, Jim!)*

Computer Games Plus introduced "VIDI-ST", the Video Image Device Interface, imported from Scotland. It can sample video in real time, collecting up to three frames a second from any composite source. You can cut and paste, animate, recolor, and lots more with the included software. List is \$199.95.

Happy Computers was showing all its products including the new "Quick*Verter." Used with drives having a thru port or with an internal drive, "Quick*Verter" provides for fast and reliable conversion of Macintosh disks to and from Magic Sac, Spectre and GEM format. It also allows the use of high density disks if you have high density drives hooked to your system. The "Q*VERTER" will begin shipping in May. List price is \$179.95

Gadgets by Small introduced the **GCR**. Although it probably will not be shipping until August, the **GCR** was there and working. For those who live in a cave and don't know what it is, the **GCR** is a cartridge which will allow an ST to run MAC software right off the shelf without any kludgy transfers to Spectre format first. Dave Small warns that there may be some non-Atari drives with which the **GCR** will not work. Some can be modified to make them work; if not, **Gadgets** will refund your money. List is \$299.95, not including the ROMs, and there is a \$100 rebate to registered customers ordering before June 1.

Avant Garde introduced its new hardware IBM emulator, **pc ditto II**. Although not quite ready to ship, **pc ditto II** allows IBM compatible software to run on an ST right out of the box. Unlike its predecessor, this IBM emulator is hardware based (a simple plug in modification) and runs at 10 MHz with a Norton SI rating of 3.0, quite an increase over the current software-only version. List is \$299.95 with a 50% discount to registered owners.

Wuztech was showing its monitor for all 3 resolutions. **Supra** had its line of hard drives and

other products. **Artisan Software** was demonstrating two ST programs, "Word Quest", which makes word search puzzles, and "Graph Maker," which makes professional looking graphs. **Beckmeyer Development** introduced "TURBO POS," a point of sale multiuser software and hardware system. **Infinite Storage Systems** was showing Bernoulli removable cartridge hard drives for the ST. **MichTron** featured "ST TUNE-UP," a hard drive maintenance tool. **Best Electronics** had their usual assortment of Atari items, of all kinds. And **Federated**, Atari's retail chain, had a ton of hardware for sale and presented live MIDI assisted musical entertainment throughout the show.

Atari was also showing some goodies in their booth, including "Wordflair" and "DeskSet II." "Wordflair" is a combination word processor, spreadsheet, database, graph generator, and desktop publishing program that uses GDOS. Availability is supposed to be June with a rumored list of \$149.95. "DeskSet II" is the desktop publishing system we've been hearing about, but I did not get a good look at it. No word on availability or price. Also in the Atari booth was the **Moniterm 19"** monitor. It looked very nice, but at \$2000, will be for the very serious user only.

Although nowhere in sight at the regular show on Saturday, **STacy** was shown at the concert that night and at the show on Sunday and looked really nice. The unit displayed had two floppy drives, but the production model will have one floppy and a 20 megabyte hard disk. The display was a green screen, but I was told the final unit will have a blue/silver display similar to the Tandy 1400LT laptop. It had all the standard ports, a small trackball in the lower right corner, and separate cursor control keys and numeric keypad. Although the cursor and keypad keys were smaller than the normal keys, it is quite an improvement over those laptop keyboards that lack them altogether; and where you toggle some of the normal keys between cursor and keypad mode. Sam Tramiel stated availability should be around July.

Some miscellaneous show STuff: **Antic** announced that the "GFA BASIC 3.0" compiler

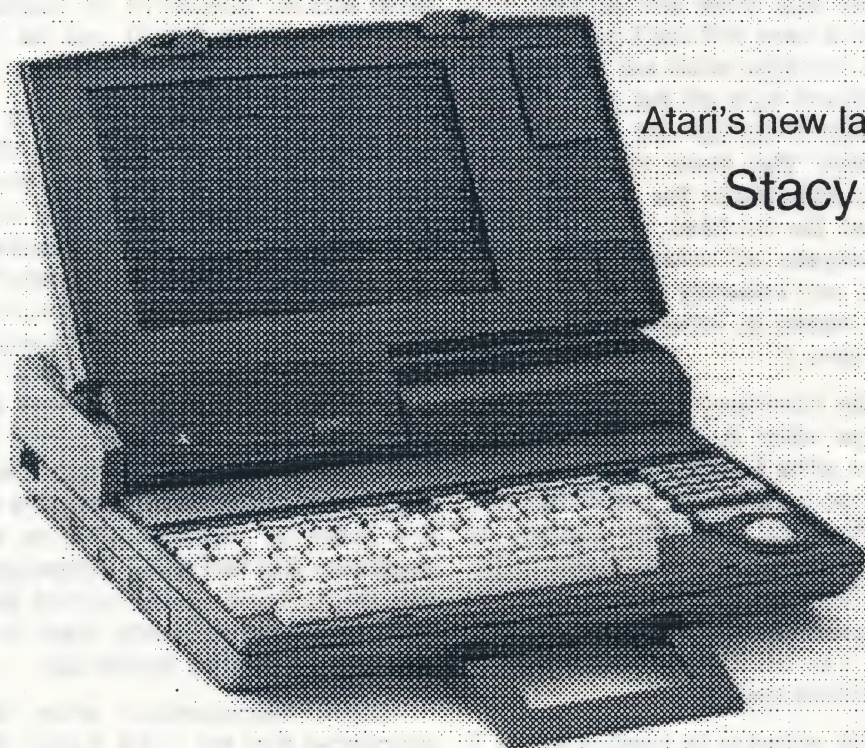
will be available in June or July. **ST World**, **ST-LOG**, and **STart** were offering discount subscription rates, and **STart** supposedly sold 1,700 subscriptions in the two days. The word is that over a half million dollars worth of hardware and software was sold at the show. Timeworks had a booth but, surprisingly, was not there. MichTron reportedly secured the exclusive right during the show to bundle Imagen's UltraScript with its **FLEET STREET PUBLISHER DTP** package. And when Sam Tramiel brought Stacy out at the Saturday night concert, he was surprised to find the batteries completely worn down.

Speaking of the concert, the Saturday night affair emphasized "ATARI and the MIDI commitment". Michael Pender of the Moody Blues hosted the show and featured special guests Mick Fleetwood of Fleetwood Mac and Jimmy Hotz, the developer of the Atari/Hotz Keyboard, a device that apparently allows non-musical types to create their own music. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of a gold record to Atari's Frank Foster in recognition of

the superb performance of the ST in the creation of the music for the chase scene and the sound track of the movie "Colors". It was also revealed at the show that the Oscar-winning song for the original score for a movie ("Maligo Beanfield") was scored on an Atari.

The World of Atari at Disneyland was not the extravaganza that I had anticipated, but it was an enjoyable experience nevertheless; especially since it had been a year and a half since the last and only Atari-specific show I was able to attend. Also, since I was going to be in the area anyway; and because attending the show provided airline, hotel, and area attraction discounts, it was certainly a worthwhile trip. Hmm, I wonder where next April's show is going to be?

(Editors' note: Hey, Dan - where are our Mickey Mouse T-shirts that you promised us?!)



Atari's new laptop

Stacy



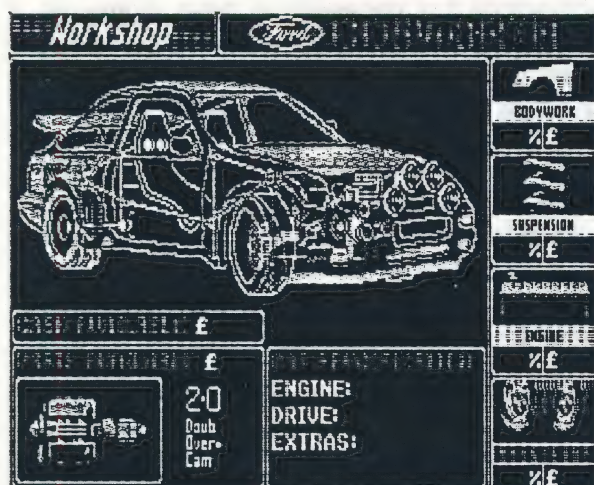
A Review by Richard Maddox

A number two best seller in England, now available here in the States, **Mandarin / Red Rat Software's "Lombard RAC Rally"** (hereafter referred to as Lombard) is an automobile rally simulation/game based on a real rally held yearly in England. Lombard comes on 2 copy-protected disks. Included in the package are an easy to read, concise "driver's manual" containing the games instructions, a history of the Lombard RAC RALLY, and technical specs of the car: a Ford Cosworth Sierra (known here as the Merkur XR4Ti). There is also a 4-color fold-out with 15 maps of the rally course, and 2 self-sticking color decals proclaiming "I completed the Lombard RAC Rally on my Atari ST." Lombard is not your typical "get in and go" racing game, though the ultimate goal is to complete the full rally in the shortest time possible. The game consists of four basic parts: the full rally, qualification for the rally, the workshop, and the TV interview. The full rally course consists of 5 "legs" of 3 "stages" each, for a total 15 separate stages in all. Each stage is one of three types: road, forest, and mountain; and, one of three conditions: normal, fog, and night. In order to qualify for the full rally, you must first complete all 5 legs and win at least 1 prize. Prizes are awarded for beating the game's 3 target times for a leg. The workshop is provided for you to make modifications and repairs to your car. Damage to the car is

registered in four categories: body, tires, suspension, and engine, as a percentage. Potential modifications to the car include fog and driving lights, 4-wheel drive and two larger and more powerful engines. In order to affect repairs or modifications it is necessary to have money (in English Pounds), which, at the start of the game, you are devoid of. Money may be accumulated in 2 ways: first, by beating the target times for the leg you are on, and second, by participating in the games most novel feature- the "TV interview". The interview is actually a multiple choice quiz based on the history of the Lombard RAC RALLY found in the driver's manual. This quiz may be taken only once prior to any qualifying leg. Once qualified, and having selected the full rally, you traverse each leg in a predetermined order. The workshop is available at anytime during the rally but however much time you spend there is counted as part of current leg. Failure to beat a leg's target time, or accumulating 100% damage in any one of the damage categories, ends the game and cancels out any modifications to the car you have made. Lombard's graphics are a curious combination of excellent and fair. The car's interior is finely detailed, complete with working gauges, speedometer, tach, shifter, etc., as well as a map of the current stage and 2 timers. Your viewpoint from the interior may seem unusual at first because it is from the center and behind the



driver. But since this is a rally, there is a navigator as well as a driver; and you must function as both, reading maps, keeping track of time, and driving. While unusual, this arrangement makes sense. The scenery graphics, on the other hand, leave something to be desired. They are rather sparse. The "forest" consists of



a single line of trees on either side, with plenty of room between them. While there are some nice touches like the obligatory obstacle car, and hunks of your car flying up in front of you when you have a serious accident, they don't make up for the deficiencies. The screen-scrolling is also not quite smooth but not so bad as to interfere with playing. The sound effects are quite good. Engine revs are presented realistically, rising and falling as you shift or go up and down hills.

If you beat a leg's target time you are treated to the cheers and hand-clapping of unseen onlookers. The car handles well and is quick in its standard version; and the acquisition of 4-wheel drive and a more powerful engine make substantial improvements in both areas. Lombard's only major defect is the aforementioned loss of modifications if you fail to complete the full rally or wreck your car. Since one bad leg time can wipe out all your previous work, this can be annoying. However, as long as you don't choose the full rally, you can race all day as long as you don't wreck the car, regardless of whether or not you beat the target times. Overall, Lombard is a very good driving/adventure/quiz game which should bring hours of enjoyment to all those computer-car nuts out there (like me!). *(Editors' note: We don't call Richard "Mad Dog" for nothing!)*

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S.S.A.G. Newsletter needs articles on all aspects of Atari computer usage. Of particular interest are entertainment software reviews, explanation of programming techniques, and applications discussions. If you'd like to write for S.S.A.G. News, please consider the following guidelines:

Text files should be in 1ST Word, Word Perfect, or pure ASCII formats. Picture files should be in DEGAS, Neochrome, or Easy Draw .GEM or .IMG formats. If you do not wish your material to be redistributed among other Atari newsletters, please indicate this when submitting the material.

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SIG HARTMANN AND COMPANY SPEAKS TO USERS AT WORLD OF ATARI

by John Nagy

From ST*ZMAGAZINE, Issue #19, May 5, 1989

A highlight of the Disneyland Hotel WORLD OF ATARI SHOW (April 22-23) was a seminar with Sig Hartmann, Atari Vice President, along with Mike Dendo, Vice President of Sales, and Joe Mendolia, Vice President of Marketing. Despite the "CORONADO ROOM" being what seemed like an unmarked mile from the World sales floor, through halls, around buildings, and down stairs, an over capacity crowd of more than 300 attended. Sig was surprised at the interest in what he had to say, and said that Sam would be pleased to know so many people supported Atari. In fact, had the meeting been held next door to the sales floor, I am certain that the attendance would have been tripled.

Sig Hartmann is a distinguished and youngish older man. His full head of grey hair and heavy German accent lend authority to his every word, and he makes you believe everything he says. And yes, you BELIEVE IT. I feel quite sure that Sig would not lie to anyone... and if he ever did, we wouldn't know it. A more ideal sales leader cannot be imagined. Sig opened his talk after waiting for a microphone - they actually expected a small enough turnout to not need one.

He began by reciting the recent history of Atari, including the decision last year to sacrifice the U.S. market to hold on to the European leadership. Insufficient RAM chips were blamed for lack of product. Atari felt that they had enough product to push in Europe (where higher prices were also possible) to establish Atari as a standard, but not enough to make a change in the domestic market. He conceded that the US dealers, developers, and users suffered for this decision.

The new products (STACY, PORTFOLIO, etc) were discussed, and the 68030 UNIX/TOS machine was mentioned as being planned for the end of 1989. Sig cut that part of the discussion short, citing a new policy, per Sam Tramiel, of not announcing or detailing "anything unless we can have for sale in 60 days" will significantly reduce the "vaporware" image of Atari.

"Atari could have become a standard in the US last year if we had enough product. We did it in Europe, and we will have to work twice as hard to come back this year, but we will do it in the USA. This is the year for the USA", said Sig to sustained applause. Distribution, marketing, sales, and availability were mentioned as the keys.

Moving into the Sales seat at Atari, Sig will be specifically in charge of corporate, OEM, and government/institutional sales. He mentioned that a corporate sales success cannot occur without network systems, and that Atari was working on several. The BIODATA Ethernet system was mentioned, but Sig said it was a little too expensive. He pointed out the virtues of desktop publishing systems below the price of a single component of other systems and described an "EXCEL-like" powerful spreadsheet that he was "only about a year past due" on turning out. Coming Atari software, the Postscript emulator ULTRASCRIPT, and other advances in ST software (exhibited with almost excessive outpourings at the World of Atari show!) all were cited as proof of Atari's power and resurgence.

User group support is most certainly wanted by

Atari, and Sig says the most important thing Atari can do for user groups is to succeed as a computer company. He said that sales of the size they expect this year could as much as triple the numbers of users in groups. Sig mentioned that there had been three user group newsletters sent out since last fall, and that if groups had not gotten them, they should contact Atari to verify their registrations.

Sig's comments ended on a personal note. He noted that he and Jack Tramiel are the two oldest people at Atari, and that he "could eventually look forward to either dying or fading away. As dying is not my intention, I expect to slowly fade away and make room for new blood." Although some might take this as fishing for a retirement in the near future, Sig is in no way retreating. I took it as more a way to convey his blessing and our confidence in him on the "new guys" sitting next to him at the speaker's table. "Sam said I hadn't suffered enough yet, and that he wanted a couple more years out of me", he had laughed earlier in the session.

Joe Mendolia, the new guy that came over from IMAGEN to handle Atari Marketing, will inherit User Group Support as part of his division. He will pick the replacement for Cindy Claveran, who left the User Group Coordinator position after less than a year there (he is still taking resume's!). Although generally quiet during the seminar, Joe is approachable and genuinely interested in resolving the snafus that Atari marketing has been famous for. He welcomed input regarding bad dealers and ideas for change.

Mike Dendo is young and all business. As Vice President of Sales, it is his job to manage the distribution systems for Atari products. Although he seemed well informed and competent, he had a defined edge of what I took for indifference to the user's situation in the Atari-starved world we have today. In several cases during the question and answer period that followed Sig's talk, Mike made questioners feel that much of the trouble they were having with dealers, products, and warranty was their own fault. Even in the few cases where this is indeed the truth, one need not rub it in during a very public forum. I hope Mike does not carry this

attitude when arranging distribution channels. He can use some charm and warmth lessons from Sig. But who couldn't?

The CD ROM device was asked about, and it was confirmed that it was held back for so long due to the commitment not to release it until it could be sold for \$500. It is finally possible to place it at \$599 retail, so the project is moving ahead. No explanation for why the software was not completed during the "wait" and thus is now the reason for some further delay.

Scheduling of domestic releases was confirmed to be intended "from now on" to be AHEAD of overseas. "Europe can't even have the Stacy for display now". Sig projected that "60, 70 thousand units" of the Portfolio would be shipping each month by this fall.

Broad spectrum advertising was asked for, and Mike Dendo explained that it was not cost effective to advertise in such a way that much of the message is wasted in areas where the product is not available. He promised heavy advertising when the new products reach the market, and repeated the company confidence in the Portfolio. There is LOTS of interest in it at it's below \$400 price point and unique market niche.

Federated status was questioned. Mike said that Atari was "basically looking at a June 30 drop-dead date" on Federated, meaning that they intend for it to be sold or "something" by then and no longer a concern of Atari. Sig said that it seemed like a good thing, but after trying it, Atari decided to go back to what it knew, being a technology leader and producing the best products at the best prices. Federated has lately closed 13 more of its stores, leaving 43 in the Southwest. Internal word remains that Greg Pratt, President of the Federated division at Atari, is still fighting to buy the chain from within. As to whether Federated (in whatever incarnation it has after the split with Atari) will continue to sell Atari products, Mike said "that's a real good question..." and recommended that the questioner take it out to Wayne Smith, Southern California Regional Sales Manager. Sig said, sure, it is a retail chain, and they will sell anything that sells well.

California Regional Sales Manager. Sig said, sure, it is a retail chain, and they will sell anything that sells well.

APO (Armed Services PXes and the like) should be back in the Atari business within 120 days, said Mike in answer to a comment that the products were unavailable for some time now. "APO dealers are like any other, we had no product til now for the US, so we had none for APO, why should they be treated any differently?" He added that a new contract was just signed to restart that distribution.

Atari 8-bit users finally raised their voices and asked where they fit in all this ST and new product talk. Sig stressed earnestly that he and Sam had both agreed that 8-bit support would continue. Whatever that means. He did say that it was extremely difficult to get developers interested in making new software for anything but new machines, but that he held hope for the DIAMOND package (by REEVE SOFTWARE) in sparking new attention. He said that Atari was very interested in the cart that simulates the operations of an ST in a mouse and window environment. A bundle of hardware and software using DIAMOND will be promoted as soon as more basic applications are completed and tested. "We want it to be good because we will stand behind it."

In response to questions about new monitors, Sig repeated the company policy line: "We are working on three main things in our new machines. Better color, better resolution, and better sound."

About Atari customer service (and the lack of sufficient staff and/or an 800 number), Mike said it was the responsibility of the dealers to support their customers, not the company. This answer was not taken well by the group, despite being true.

Atari has gained 35% of the MIDI market in the US and is still growing. In fact, more of the NEW dealers in the MEGA and ST machines are music stores than are computer stores. The STACY is expected to increase this market share due to the extremely portable nature of the full featured laptop. Performers can move and set up their equipment in far less time.

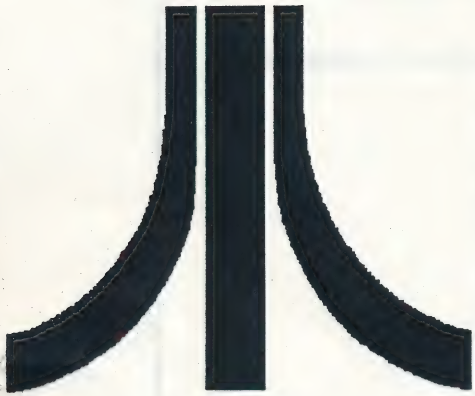
TOS 1.4 and the Blitter were quizzed about. Tos 1.4 is currently in all new production MEGA machines, as is the Blitter. When existing supplies of the older TOS ROMs are exhausted, 1.4 will be in all ST machines. The 520 and 1040 machines will probably never be fitted with blitters either for new production or retrofit, due to insufficient shielding in those machines. They cannot meet the RF radiation requirements of the FCC as currently configured, while the MEGAs can.

When asked what Atari was doing to replace the obsolete Apples in America's classrooms, after the laughter died down Sig said that it would be his challenge to work in that market as well, but that it would take some time. It is apparently not a priority now.

The seminar concluded with a congratulation of Richard Tsukiji of ST WORLD MAGAZINE for making the WORLD OF ATARI SHOW a reality and invited all to watch for ATARI to appear on COMPUTER CHRONICLES, a PBS specialty news show. An all-Atari show will air in May (and has already aired on some stations). Consult your local PBS station to find when (or if) it will be shown in your city. These programs are often scheduled several times in the month, so you may yet catch it.

The crowd broke up, generally happy to have heard some solid dialog and reasons for optimism. If Atari holds their course and can produce what they are planning, 1989 will indeed be the year of ATARI.





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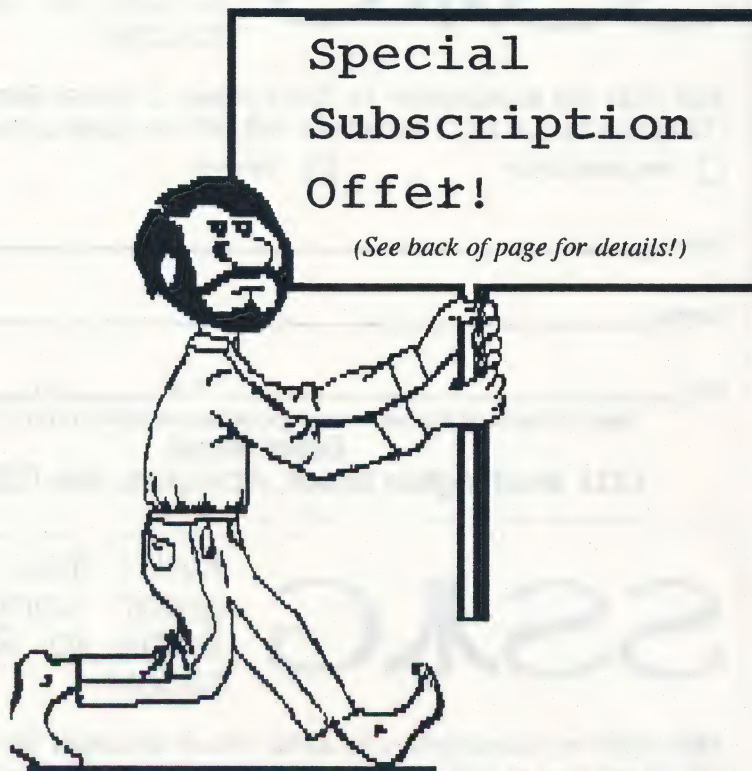
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S.S.A.G. Helping Hands:

The following members have volunteered their services for those with problems or questions concerning specific Atari ST software and hardware:

Spectre 128 Kevin Champagne 472-1502

MichTron BBS Dana Jacobson 567-8642(BBS)

pc-ditto / Word Perfect Chet Freeman 328-0811

Timeworks Data Manager ST John Ryan 282-4239

Timeworks Desktop Publisher ST Norman Boucher, Jr. 361-0590

For help with software or hardware not listed here, call any of the great boards listed inside the back cover. There, the authors of "Kev 'N Steve's Excellent Column", or other knowledgeable people are available to help.

If you'd like to volunteer to be an advisor, contact any Steering Committee member.

REPORT FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

On a drizzly May 1, the Steering Committee, minus the mysteriously missing Chet Freeman, convened at the 'Cache. Dave Anderson, Norman Boucher, Kevin Champagne, Dana Jacobson, Richard Maddox, Mitchell Myers, Dave Read and Gerry Strathmann managed to battle the sprinkles and attend the meeting.

Before the meeting officially started, Mitch Myers set up and tested his cabling for a second (and third) video screen. Everyone was amazed when it worked instantly! Expect to see his technical expertise at work during the next General Meeting.

The first official order of business was to establish future meeting topics. Kevin Champagne will be demonstrating Spectre 128 (as GCR is not yet available), to be followed by a brief demonstration of Ultrascript (time permitting). Gerry Strathmann will be doing a pc-ditto II "challenge" in June, comparing the emulator's performance with that of dedicated IBM-compatibles. The heat of July will provide an excellent opportunity to sample some hot new entertainment software (hopefully including DUNGEON MASTER II, Lord Chaos). The possibility of a MIDI demonstration was raised once again, and any assistance in that area would be greatly appreciated.

No sooner had the schedule been confirmed when the debate over organizing a computer fest came to a boil. Many opinions were thrown about, pros and cons wrestled with, and a few conclusions were drawn. The greatest realization was that without the full support of the entire user group, not even a miniscule festival could be organized. Norm Boucher volunteered to flesh out a preliminary outline of what would be involved. He has and will continue to discuss this with the RIACE user group.

Miscellaneous resolutions, arrived at during indeterminate times of the meeting, were:

Mitch Myers volunteering to assist any 8-bit users (he will be available through the Toad Hall and Harbour Light BBSs);

Continued kudos to Dave Anderson for his work as Acting Advertising Director;

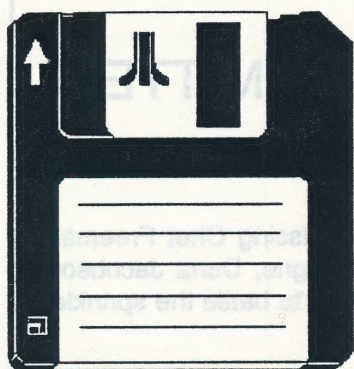
Efforts to publicize the SSAG meetings through local BBSs will be stepped up; and,

A call for greater volunteerism must go out.

On the last point, expect a list of tasks to be brought up at every meeting, accompanied by a request for volunteers to handle these minor chores. The user group can only survive through the efforts of its members, and both the novice and the expert can contribute something.

With that, and Kevin's victorious seven-under-par round in Mean-18, the meeting was closed, raincoats were donned and the search for Chet began.

As always, the Steering Committee welcomes any S.S.A.G. members to attend our meetings on the first friday of each month. If you are interested in helping determine the direction, structure and activities of the group, joining the Steering Committee is the best way to do it!



**PUBLIC DOMAIN
SOFTWARE
LIBRARY**
Dana Jacobson, Librarian

- #1 -- PLAY-IT sound player with various .SND files
 - #2 -- More .SND files from 2001 Space Odyssey
 - #3 -- Digitized sound effects from original Star Trek TV show
 - #4 -- Various disk utilities, and more
 - #5 -- Various graphics & digi-sounds; includes Spectrum animation
 - #6 -- Spectrum animations w/ Anispec, EXCITE and classic WALLS
 - #7 -- CAD3D animations, includes Strange Systems demo
 - #8 -- CAD3D animations, including California Raisins & Bill the Cat
 - #9 -- CAD3D animations, including Chasers & Saucer & Robo-Ray
 - #10-- CAD3D animations, including Scanned & Barbershop
 - #11-- CAD3D animations, including Chess, Star Wars, & Operator
 - #12-- CAD3D animations, including VideoBox, Flipped, & Watchman
 - #13-- CAD3D animations, including Raquel Welch
 - #14-- Various utilities, includes RamDisks, label printers, and more
 - #15-- Various TINY pix, including latest TinyView & TinyStuff
 - #16-- Various TINY pix
 - #17-- Various TINY pix
 - #18-- Various TINY pix
 - #19-- Various TINY pix
 - #20-- Various TINY pix, Rated-R
 - #21-- Various TINY pix, some Rated-R
 - #22-- Publishing Partner clip-art
 - #23-- Publishing Partner clip-art
 - #24-- Beginners' utilities, includes ST Writer Elite (latest version)
 - #25-- Games and Game demos, includes user-interactive OIDS demo
 - #26-- Utilities and accessories
 - #27-- CAD3D 3-D Objects, for use w/CAD3D animations
 - #28-- CAD3D animations, including Coke Can & The Scuzz
 - #29-- CAD3D Collection from Antic, includes CAD3D objects & demos
 - #30-- CAD3D Collection II from Antic; 3D Objects & 3D Converter
 - #31-- Antic's Stereoscopic Slideshow (Double-sided disk)
 - #32-- Antic's Cyberscape Demo (Need color & 1 meg, double-sided disk)
 - #33-- PC Pursuit Utilities, includes Mark Asbell's GeeWhiz Autodialer
-
- Prices are as follows:
For S.S.A.G. members -> \$2.00 if you supply disk / \$4.00 without
Non-members -> \$3.00 if you supply disk / \$5.00 without
Prices subject to change without notice. This listing, and subsequent upgrades will be available via mail; or by contacting the following Boards: S.S.A.G. BBS -- 617-331-9640 Harbour Light BBS -- 617-472-1503 Toad Hall EBBS -- 617-562-8642 Or leave mail at GENIE to D.JACOBSON2

I may not know
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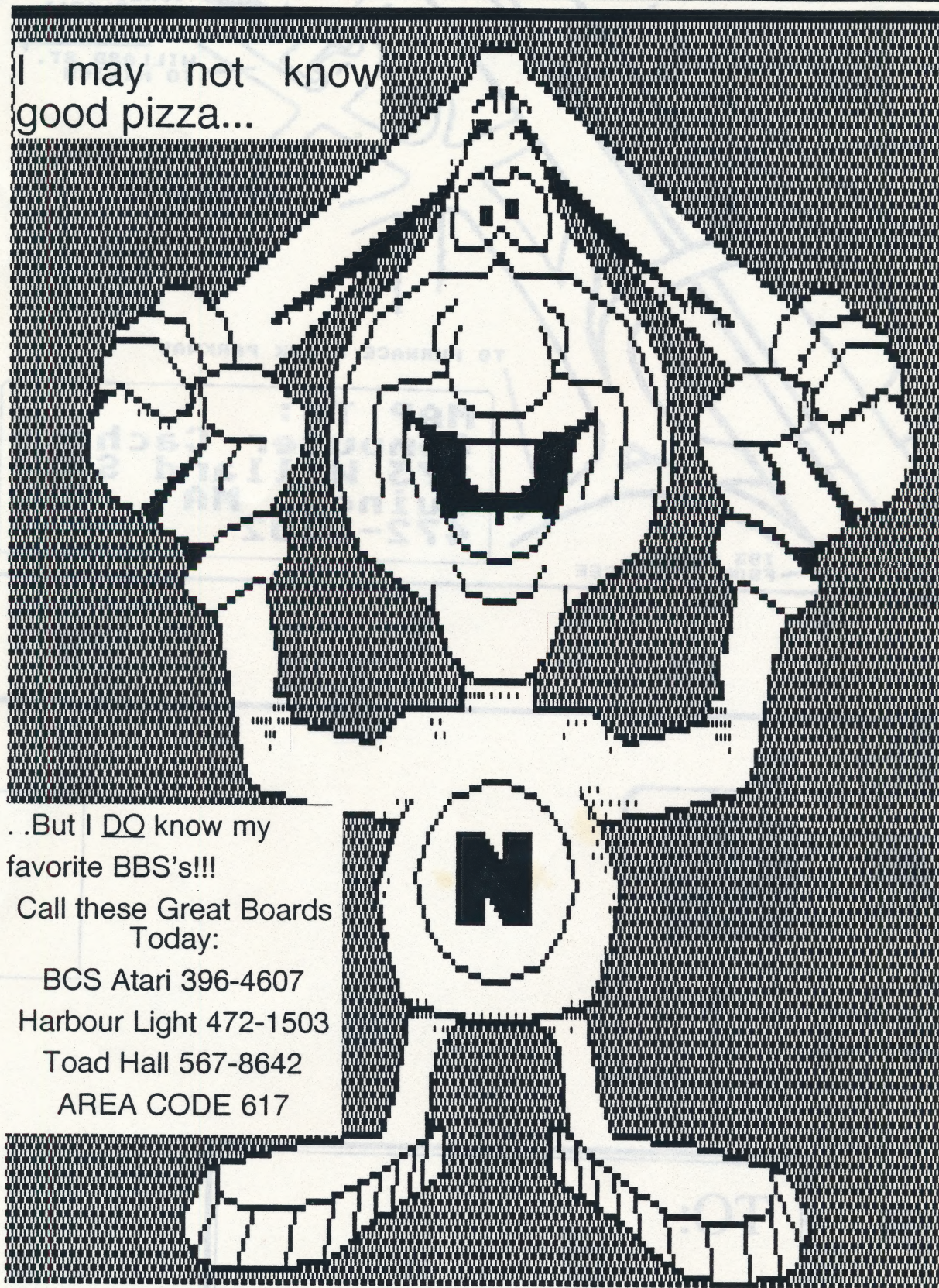
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